



ENDLESHAM EMORIES

34TH BOMB GROUP H

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REUNION '98 Boise, Idaho



See You There
September 10 - 13, 1998

OBSERVATIONS

Well, here we are again with the mid-year issue of the newsletter. I've been in this job for more than twelve (12) years and, maybe, it's time for someone else to think of taking it over. By the way, for some reason I'm receiving a lot less mail now than I used to so this issue will probably be a little smaller than previous issues.

As I've mentioned previously, my memory is slowly leaving me and it might become a problem in the future. Believe me, I might have spoken to Rose about some subject an hour ago and I've already forgotten what we talked about. Let me tell you, that's scary to me. I hate to think of what is in store for me in the future. In any case, I'm here for this issue and, hopefully, am putting out an issue which most, if not all, of you will enjoy reading. I do try very hard to do so.

An insert in this issue is for our reunion at Boise, ID. in September. If you can please try to attend. We do have a good time, seeing old friends and making new ones. Rose and I have always had an enjoyable vacation at our reunions and we believe you will also. Think about it.

By the way, in the March issue I said that Rose and I would soon be leaving for Florida to visit our son and daughter. However, due to factors beyond our control, we did not make that trip and did not get to bask in the warmth and sunshine of Florida. However, due to El Nino, our weather here had never gone as bad as usual. We had a better winter than we expected.

This issue, as usual, will go to all of our listed 34th Bomb Group personnel, whether they have paid their dues or not. We hope this issue will convince some of our "Unpaid" people to become paid members and receive four (4) issues a year instead of just one. Think about it!

That's about all I have to say for now. Rose and I wish you all a pleasant summer and, hopefully, you plan to be at our reunion in the fall. SEE YOU THERE??

Eli Baldea,
Editor

Don't Forget To Send Your Dues

**Mail \$10.00 To: Harold Province
153 North Hill Dr.
Carriere, MS 39426**

**Also, please send self-addressed,
stamped envelope for return mail.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Now is the time for us to complete our individual plans to attend the annual reunion at Boise, Idaho. Harold Rutka, Bob Wright and Bruce Sothern have done their onsite work again as reported elsewhere in this issue. I realize that more and more of us each year are less physically and financially able to participate in these reunions but I encourage all of you that are especially those living in the western parts of the U.S. - to come to Boise. It will be a rewarding experience.

The article "Misery Agent - 41-28838" was started in the March issue of MM and is continued in this issue. This article is an amazing product of the "Information Age. Two Englishmen, Sean & Kevin Welsh, prepared it. Twenty years ago they found a crash crater and bits and pieces of the B-24 "Misery Agent" when they were teenagers living in southern England. Gathering information about the crash of this B-24 was tedious then. When Kevin tapped into the Internet in 1997 he found many sources and a flood of information about the airplane, the crew and the mission. This was the information that had not been available over those twenty years. He even contacted by E-mail the surviving member of the "Misery Agent" crew, Bob Gross. The Welsh brothers invited Bob Gross to England and subsequently hosted his visit to the crash site and the military cemetery at Cambridge where five of the crew are buried.

Contrast this exchange of information today with the 1944 snail paced letters back and forth from Mendlesham to our families and friends in the United States. It is a different world today!

FROM THE TREASURER'S COMPUTER



This is going to be a short one for a change. I don't know why, unless it was the notice on the mailing label, but quite a few of you sent in checks marked for 1998 dues even though you had already paid for 1998 dues! Maybe the message on the label "1998 dues being accepted now" was the cause for the overpayment of dues. Please heed this--if your mailing label has a **red circle on it you owe current dues! HAVE YOU GOT THAT? RED CIRCLE - OWE DUES!** And send your checks to ME!! Eli doesn't want them!!

FROM THE TREASURER'S COMPUTER

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Strange how a brief note such as that is read and followed. I wish more of you would heed my pleas about letting me know when you are going to be away from your usual mailing address. We've had an unusual number of "TEMPORARILY AWAY" notices from the Postal Service for both the December and March issues. Each notice means that a copy of Mendlesham Memories was thrown away by the USPS. Please don't make the USPS throw your copy away!

It's too late to do so now but I hope you sent in your updated biography and pictures to Turner Publishing for Volume II of the 34th Bombardment Group book. Some of you have mentioned that there was nothing heroic about what you did and, therefore, nothing to write about. That is true for almost all of us--we were just ordinary guys doing what was asked of us and all of us wanting to get the job finished so we could be on our way home.

Don't forget that the 8th AF Heritage Museum is also asking for your personal data so they can build a file on the men who were in the 8th AF. See the December MM for details.

For those of you who have graduating seniors who are planning on going to college--did you give them an application form for the 1998 Ray Summa 34th B.G. Scholarship? There is still time to do this - applications are due by July 10, 1998.

Reservation forms for the 1998 reunion at Boise are included in this issue. We hope to have a good number at Boise so send in your hotel reservations and the group activity reservations. If you haven't been to a reunion you don't know what you are missing. Hope to see you all there!

Cheers to all,
Hal Province,
Treasurer

REUNION COMMITTEE REPORT

Boise extends its warm welcome to members of the 34th Bomb Group. Remember this site was selected by our 34th Bomb Group members at the Raleigh, No. Carolina reunion. Boise started in the early 1840's when the Oregon Trail came right through what later became Boise. The city really began in 1862 when gold was discovered nearby and an army fort was established. With newfound security the community began to grow.

The DOUBLE TREE HOTEL is promising that our rooms will be "Grouped Together" for easy access to our meals and the "Hospitality Room". Please note: THE CUT-OFF DATE FOR THESE ROOMS AND THE RATES WILL BE - AUGUST 20TH - ROOMS AND RATES ARE GUARANTEED THREE DAYS BEFORE

AND THREE DAYS AFTER OUR REUNION. ROOMS RENTED AFTER AUGUST 20TH WILL BE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY" (Our hotel will be the Doubletree Riverside.)

The "Fly-in members" will have complimentary transportation to and from the airport. The telephone to the hotel is located at the "INFORMATION CENTER" near the "Luggage Carousel" Dial #26 for transportation.

The tour to MOUNTAIN HOME AFB will be on Friday September 11th - Lt. Col. Tom Ritchie has assisted in the arrangements. The busses will depart at 09:00 AM. We will have a static display, lunch, briefing on the base mission, memorial service in the base chapel and a windshield tour of the base - returning at 04:00 PM.

The tour will enable you to see what you have had a hand in building. The Army Air Force's wartime achievements of dominance of the "enemy" skies and paralyzing their economy did not win the war by itself but did make possible victory over the axis powers. We demonstrated what could be achieved and, in doing so, each of us contributed to the formation of the UNITED STATES AIR FORCE.

There will be a "Two Hour City Tour" available for Saturday afternoon on the "Boise Tour Train" which will include a brief stop at the NATURE CENTER.

The weather in September has an average temperature of 76 degrees and a low of 47 degrees with an average of three rain days.

We hope to see you all at the "14TH 34TH BOMB GROUP REUNION" at the DOUBLETREE RIVERSIDE HOTEL.

Harold C. Rutka, Bruce Sothern, Robert Wright
Your Reunion Committee

RETURN TO MENDLESHAM, ENGLAND JUNE 3, 1998

The following members will be traveling to England on June 3rd, 1998:

Thomas & Madeline Belleau, Claude & Genevieve Conklin, Kenneth & Kathleen Paxton, Fred Rondo, Everett & Margo Rose, Herbert Roy, Jack Rude, Harold & Genevieve Rutka, Franklin & Alda Sivret and Fred and Rachel Waltz.

We will meet at HEATHROW AIRPORT and travel to Norwich, which will be our base of operations. Our group will join with the 100th Bomb Group and have some of the tour together.

Friday evening is scheduled to be our dinner with LADIES OF MENDLESHAM.

Saturday we will be at the MEMORIAL, where we

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RETURN TO MENDLESHAM, ENGLAND JUNE 3, 1998

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will present a wreath and visit in the Mendlesham area. Saturday evening we will be at a HANGAR DANCE in the Suffolk area. Sunday will be at the cemetery in Cambridge. The graves of the 34th members will be marked and we will place a wreath in their memory. Then we go to DUXFORD, THE BOMBER COMMAND, LONDON, and, then - return home.

Harold C. Rutka
England Reunion Coordinator

SPECIAL

We have the following letter from someone looking for information:

Ian Hawkins gave me your address. Can you help? I have been wondering for many years on the fate of two of your aircraft and crews shot down over France on June 22, 1944.

In R. Freeman's War Diary I read on account of one of the B-24's which fell in the target area but not a clue on the second. Does anyone know that fate of the second A/C? Did any of the two crews survive? I know you must receive dozens of inquiries like this but it would put my mind at ease if I knew the outcome.

I was 7-1/2 years old at the time and living at the north end of Paris and we saw a U.S. bomber come down. For many years I thought it was one of yours but recently I found out it was a B17-G of the 96th Bomb Group.

I would be very grateful for any information regarding your two B-24's shot down on that fateful day of June 22, 1944.

Ed. Note: Anyone with information regarding this request can write to:

Mr. Rene Psarolis
24 Craigston Avenue
Ayr, Ayrshire, KA7-3JW
Great Britain

From president Al Israelson we have the following:

A tribute to Phyllis Van Buskirk:

Phyllis died in Litchfield Park, Arizona in February from a brain hemorrhage. She was a native of Kentucky and the wife of Bill Buskirk, a radio operator instructor at Blythe and the radio operator of our 4th Squadron Crew No. 1 from April to November at Mendlesham. Phyllis was a long-time attendee at the 34th Bomb Group Assn. reunions beginning at Nashville in 1984. We will miss her enthusiastic manner and her contagious smile at Boise and the reunions to come.

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ROSE'S CORNER

Dear Fellow members of the 34th B.G.:

I'm wondering how you all survived this past winter. We were pretty lucky until March when a super-storm paid us its full attention. We suffered thru the day with no power and no water. Couldn't get the car out of the garage with all of the piled-up snow leaning against the door. Couldn't go anywhere because the plows didn't have a chance to clear a path in any direction so we kept donning our layers and layers of clothing in order to keep warm. Candles were lit everywhere so as not to stumble.

Our daughter and son-in-law rescued us that evening by driving their 4 wheel drive truck thru the ruts made by other cars which had tried to drive home somehow. Stranded cars were everywhere causing an unforgettable mess for all!!

If you have read this far please continue because you will want to send the following to someone who will feel that you have brightened their day. It is taken from the "Dear Abby" column of our local newspaper. Just read it carefully and I'll bet that you will do it again because it's a lot to absorb in one reading and written in a very clever manner!

The author is unknown. If we knew who it was I'm sure that we all would send a big thank-you for coming up with something new for seniors. Here it is:

OLD FOLKS ARE WORTH A FORTUNE

Old folks are worth a fortune: with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet and gas in their stomachs. I have become a lot more social with the passing of their years; some might even call me a frivolous old gal. I'm seeing five gentlemen every day.

As soon as I wake, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go to see John. Then Charley Horse comes along and, when he is here, he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. (He doesn't like to stay in one place very long so he takes me from joint to joint.) After such a busy day I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay. What a life!

P.S. the preacher came to call the other day. He said that at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him I do - all the time. No matter where I am - in the parlor, upstairs in the kitchen or down in the basement - I ask myself, "Now, what am I here after?"

Stay well and may God grant you many more years!

Love you all,
Rose and Eli



CHARLES E. DAVIS - Niles, OH.

This is in response to Louis Cohen's request for information regarding the food drops in Holland.

This first of six drops was May 1, 1945 to Rotterdam. The second was May 2 to Utrecht. The third was on May 3 to Vigelezang. This info was taken from my flight log.

We also had two passengers with our crew. One was Chaplain Eller and the other was an 8th AF photographer who sent me a set of pictures of our crew.

IAN HAWKINS - England

Thanks you very much for the extra newsletters - very interesting as always. They have been distributed to the older people in Mendlesham, etc. I've sent a copy to the Percy Kindred Library and Research Centre at the 34th B.G. Memorial Museum at Framlingham.

I also received about 50 posters concerning the "Forties Night Dance" at RAF Molesworth on June 6th. I sent some of the posters with the newsletter and the rest I sent to the museum for handouts to visitors.

LONNIE CROOK - Shreveport, LA.

Thanks for doing such a good job with MM. I understand your reference to fluctuations of memory. It seems to go with same-year models.

Hopefully we will see you in Boise. We haven't attended a reunion since Barksdale and look forward to seeing you guys again.

Incidentally, our painting of the two B-17's is still hanging in the 8th AF Museum at Barksdale. It looks good there.

WILLIAM KAUFMAN - New Willmington, PA.

Just a note to thank you for the super job you have done with MM over the past many years. You have given up a lot of your retirement time to bring a lot of pleasure to all of the rest of us.

Another winter has slipped by, very mild and very little snow in our area. I only used my snow blower three times and a broom would have done just as well on two of these times.

The Good Lord willing, I'm looking forward to some trout fishing and lots of golf this summer. Eileen and I have been blessed with good health over the years. A few stumbling blocks along the way but nothing we couldn't spring back from, thank the Good Lord. I have the usual aches and pain that goes with old age, but I guess we can live with them.

We will be celebrating our 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 22nd of this year. It has been a very enjoyable 50 years.

I hope this finds you and Rose in good health and you both have an enjoyable summer.

MARY (ROBERT A.) CHEVALIER - Jaoquin, TX.

Robert, who is now 74 years of age, appears to be in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease. His memory is getting slowly worse. We try to stimulate his memory, especially of his Air Corps days, so we can leave our children and grandchildren a legacy of WWII. We have been married for almost 52 years and have four children and six grandchildren.

He can no longer identify his crew members, even from photographs which we have had for over 50 years. I ordered several videos about WWII and a recent one, "Warbirds of WWII". We have been watching it today, in hopes of bringing about recollections of his personal actions. I don't believe it is going to help.

Robert served with the 34th Bomb Group, 18th Sqdn. He was a Staff Sgt. and served as left waist gunner on a B-17. He flew 29 bombing missions over Germany. We still have his bomb tags with the names and dates of each mission on them.

Some of his crew members were John R. Young, Dexter Harris, Fred E. Hampton and Rodney B. Parrott. We noticed John R. Young's name listed in the recent TAPS section. We have kept in touch with all of these crew members over the years. This past Christmas we did not receive a card from John Young. We now know why not.

Thank you for all the work your organization does to promote fond memories of these slowly dwindling, old soldiers.

DEADLINE

Any material or items to be inserted in the September issue of Mendlesham Memories should reach me on or before July 23, 1998. That is the date our final copy will be presented to the printers.

Eli Baldea, Editor

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

LAST NAME FIRST NAME ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIPCODE

Chevalier Robert A. R.R. 1, Box 186 Joaquin, TX. 75954-9700



MISERY AGENT - 41-28838

(Continued)

By the time the crews of 7 Sqdn. could start their move towards the assembly area it was already light. Once in the 8th A.F. bomber stream, keeping position became a problem for the B-24's. the B-17's were being flown at an IAS of 145 and were ahead, the B-24 needed to be flown at 155 and this led to them having to snake from side to side to prevent overtaking. Below them the crew of the "Misery Agent" could see warships and landing crafts in the Channel. However, after crossing the French coast a severe undercast was encountered which obscured the ground. By this time the troops had hit the beaches and, without knowing exactly what was below them, dropping their bombs was out of the question. They left the target area at Caen and flew west to reform off the Channel Isles. No flak or fighters had been encountered over the target but on passing over Jersey light flak came up. Below the Channel was still full of shipping and this gave no opportunity to jettison the bomb load. The prospect of returning to the base with a full bomb load was extremely worrying for the crews as holding formation had used considerable amounts of fuel and the weight of 5000 lbs. of bombs would quickly deplete their remaining supply.

Others were feeling the effects of fuel shortage as well and the lead aircraft of 7 Sqdn. had already been forced to land just inside the English coast on a fighter

airfield to avoid running out. Another B-24 of the 490th B.G. just made it to the coast to crash land on Chesil Beach. They managed to jettison their bombs before impact and six of the crew of "Maxwell House" survived.

On board "Misery Agent" the situation was now critical and possibility of flying northeast towards the bomber bases of New Forest fuel was dwindling fast. Ahead lay the shallow waters of Poole Harbour and ditching there seemed the only option. The crew pulled the toggles on their life jackets and prepared to ditch. Suddenly the Pratt & Whitney Twin Wasp radials clattered to a stop and the aircraft dropped. Ahead lay the line of a small copse and, beyond, an open field and Poole Harbour.

As the line of trees loomed pilot Herman Doell pulled up the nose in a desperate effort to clear them. The aircraft entered a stall and, with little or no forward motion, flopped heavily into the copse. The bombs were jarred from the racks and one detonated throwing wreckage far and wide and, in that brief instant, eight lives were lost.

The Chief Constable of Dorset in his return to the Under Secretary of State at the home office for the 6th of June, 1944 reported "At 0945 hours on 6-6-44, in a copse at Fitzworth Rempstone, Corfe Castle, a Liberator, #128838, U.S. markings, No. 7 Sqdn., U.S.A. machine exploded and caught fire. Occupants all killed. Six bodies have been recovered and taken to Fitzworth House, U.S. Military Guard. U.X. Bombs amongst wreckage. N.F.S. in attendance.

At Mendlesham Bob Gross stood in line and waited. That night, surrounded by the empty beds of his crew, was a void in his life - a void that was to last 53 years. The bodies were taken to the Military Cemetery at Brookwood and, two days after D-day, Bob Gross and a driver took the staff car to attend the funeral. However both were not prepared for the sight that met them - row upon row of canvas bags and a bulldozer digging a trench. The dead of D-day had returned. Bob turned to the driver and simply said, "Let's go".

Bob joined another crew and completed his tour of duty, then returned to the States, not knowing what had happened to his crew or where they had perished. Shortly after the war the bodies were moved from Brookwood to the new American Cemetery at Cambridge. This also coincided with the repatriation of several to the States. In the early '70's two schoolboys, myself and brother, Kevin, gained a fascination for aviation and started researching the history of the air war at Dorset. We came across the police report for the 6th of June, 1944 and decided to investigate further.

A visit to the copse revealed a huge water-filled

MOVING ?????

If you are moving, or have moved, get your change of address in so that you won't miss the next issue of Mendlesham Memories. Mailing labels are printed about Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1, and Nov. 1 for the March, June, September and December issues. Send your change of address to:

HAL PROVINCE
153 North Hill Dr.
CARRIERE, MS. 39426

before the labels are printed to ensure the correct arrival



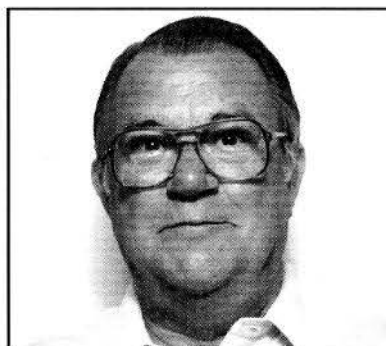
Then and Now



VERN AMES



1944

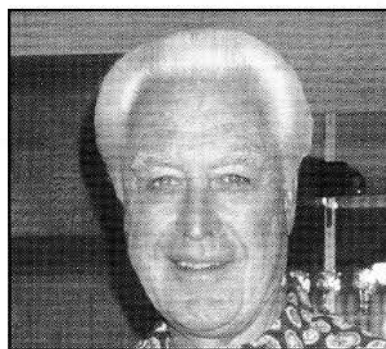


1997

NORMAN MAYER

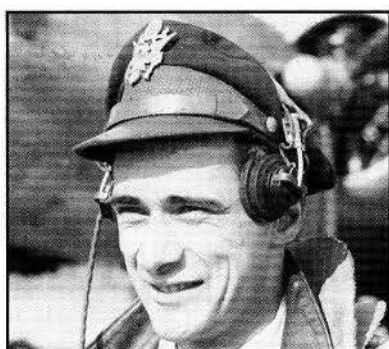


1945



1997

JOHN BLOCZINSKI



1944



1995

HDD

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34th Bomb. Group

Eli Baldea
2576 Brookwood Drive
Crown Point, Indiana 46307
(219) 988-4607



From the collection of:

Al Israelsen

Pilot, First Crew No. 1, 4th Sq. Feb - Nov 1944

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MEMORIES

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crater with small scraps of metal lying in the surrounding leaves. Over the following months a careful search revealed numerous artifacts - the pilot's seat buckle, a pilot tube, head phones, an engine plate, part of the control yoke and two propeller blades. After careful cleaning and preservation these parts were mounted on display boards. However, intensive research through British records failed to reveal who the crew really were, where they were buried or even how many were on board that day. The mystery was further deepened by the publication of a book "The Mighty Eighth Diary, which stated 10 killed in action.

Surprisingly, the breakthrough in this story came about through the internet when, early this year, my brother, Kevin, joined the technological revolution and subscribed. Still with an interest in aviation he found the Aviation Forum web page and, with several unsolved pieces of research in mind, he posted an inquiry about a 9th Air Force pilot. Jack Vrugitz of Florida quickly replied saying that research on the 9th was difficult due to poor record keeping and that 8th A.F. records were better. So we compiled a list of American aircraft in Dorset and this led to the 34th B.G. loss. Jack gave us the E-mail address of the treasurer of the 34th B.G. Assn., Harold Province. May God abundantly bless you, Hal, for taking the time to reply to our inquiry and for putting us in touch with Bob Gross. Hal knew of Bob and that his aircraft was lost on D-Day and gave him a call.

Bob couldn't believe that someone possibly knew the answers that he had craved all these years and his reaction was immediate - "Get me on the Internet!" Fortunately his son had a spare PC which was duly installed and hooked up to the internet. The next problem was easily solved by his grandson - how to work this M.M. Page 8

thing. After several false starts he finally managed to send his first message to us. "Thank God we have finally made contact."

I guess at 77 years of age if you decide that you are going to do something you go straight ahead and do it. Bob decided he wanted to meet us and within a couple of weeks had his trip to England planned and tickets bought.

And so it was that we finally came to meet him on Nov. 8th, 1997 and the questions that we had sought answers to for 20 years were finally answered. We visited the American Cemetery at Cambridge first and soon found the grave markers for 5 of the crew. The others had been taken back to America in 1947 when the U.S. Government offered repatriation of War Dead. This proved a moving occasion for us all and I suppose it was fitting that the following day we had the opportunity to join in with the Remembrance Day service in the village square and church in Kington. Warwickshire, where my brother has a restaurant. From here we travelled down to Dorset in order to visit the crash site. We had already contacted the landowners and met them on a cold, wet Monday morning in the wood. For us 20 years had rolled away and we were once again teenagers searching for fragments of recent history. For Bob a void of 53 years started to fill. The wood had changed little - the water crater was still there - the trees showing the scars of the bomb blast still stood - and the odd fragment of metal was still visible in the leaves.

We spent all day there and, finally, the sun started to go down. We had talked and laughed and remembered and each of us felt fulfilled and, yet, reluctant to leave. Then, as it became dusk, we could stay no more and we had to leave. As we made our way out of that dark wood Bob turned to the crater and said "So long boys". For him the wondering was over and he had his chance to at last say good-bye.
